



**State of Louisiana**  
Department of Health and Hospitals  
Office of Public Health

**Food Safety After a Fire**

**In Case of a Fire** post the phone number for the local fire department by each business phone. A quick response can make a vast difference when fire is involved. Make a plan and maintain a list of contact information that may be helpful in the aftermath of a fire. Include the phone number for your local health department.

**Discontinue operations** if a fire causes extensive damage to the structure of the facility and to the equipment. If a fire has been contained to one portion of the business, the unaffected portion may potentially continue to operate. Unaffected areas have no smoke, water, heat, and/or fire suppression chemical damage. This damage may not be obvious to the eye. Contact your local health department and request an inspection before operations continue in the unaffected areas.

**A food establishment that has been ordered or otherwise required to cease operations may not re-open until authorization has been granted by the appropriate regulatory authorities, including the local health department.**

**The Owner/Operator shall:**

- ① contact all other appropriate agencies to determine if the building structure is safe and approved for occupancy.
- ② sort the salvageable from the unsalvageable foods as quickly as possible.
- ③ properly dispose of unsalvageable foods.
- ④ provide general clean up and sanitization of equipment, utensils, and the structure.

**Potential Salvageable Goods: “If in doubt, throw it out”**

- Undamaged Canned Goods and Undamaged Canned Soft Drinks
- Foods stored so they were protected by a barrier such as a walk in cooler or a storage unit without extended interruption in electricity

In many cases food and single service items are not salvageable due to seen or unseen damaged caused by heat, water, chemical, soot, and smoke damage. Items packaged in thin plastic, paper, and under seal are not typically safe for consumption after such exposure.

All salvageable equipment, utensils, and food packaged food items must be properly examined for damage, cleaned with soap and water, and sanitized with an appropriate sanitizer.

**Disposal of Food**

- Food to be retained for reimbursement from a distributor must be labeled and held separately.
  - Label as “Not for Sale.”
- Food that is to be discarded must be denatured by a chemical sanitizer.
- Disposed of items must be secured within dumpsters or other refuse containers.
- The local health department is available to assist with denaturing the product and documentation.

**For those businesses that will require renovations and repairs:** Plans must be submitted to the local health department for review and approval.